41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50



ness 1832: 42). It was also reported that some young men of dubious virtue were noted for the frequency with which they walked away (Francis 1908: 131-32).

Such freedom no longer finds parental connivance, and today a girl is expected to be a virgin at marriage. She may continue to be one for some time afterwards too, for it is usually the mothers of the couple who decide when to "send them to the bed-house," as the euphemism goes. No such restrictions occur for a woman who has already been married before, and in one reported instance such a bride actually took the initiative on the first night by fondling her previously impotent groom until he was able to do what was expected of him.

In earlier times, a reliable informant estimated, a mere one or two per cent of men had relations with their brides prior to marriage, and this was because girls were married at about puberty. He also estimated that perhaps ten per cent of bridegrooms had had sexual relations before marriage with girls other than their brides. Another man who was married in 1930 asserted that his 12-year old bride lacked a hymen, but did not reach menarche until two months after marriage. This and similar anecdotes do at least suggest girls used to become sexually active around the age of 12; female education has probably elevated this age somewhat (but on the other hand it is not uncommon for young virgins to lack a hymen). In earlier times it used to be fairly common for girls of the well-to-do gentry families to marry as young as at 10 or 11 years. They tended to be well-fed and well-built girls, but menarche had not yet occurred. For the sake of form nonetheless such a bride would spend the usual five days in the menstrual hut prior to her wedding.

3.9. When the couple are especially young the boy's parents may place all sorts of barriers in the way of their consummating the marriage. This is common, and generally because the parents want the girl to work but not have children yet. Needless to say, the resourceful couple can outwit the parents in this matter, for example by an afternoon meeting while the rest of the household is out working in the fields. A more leisurely ruse is for the young husband to send his wife away to visit her father, and then to follow her after a short time. Since a bride is not supposed to do any work while visiting her parents, and since her husband is always welcome in their home, the couple will have plenty of time alone together while the rest of the family is working outside the house. And many Badaga villages have dense forest nearby.

In a similar arrangement an old man's younger brother slept with the new wife and begot children who were treated as her husband's. Such practices now seem to have stopped. "Children for an older man are a weight on his shoulder," says the proverb.

3.16. In keeping with the idea that intercourse should satisfy a couple, Badagas are familiar with a variety of coital approaches—although nothing like that described in the *Kama Sutra*. The psychological benefits of making love are acknowledged in a proverb: "[If husband and wife are] not on good terms before midnight, they will play after midnight."

Badagas customarily take a bath before having sexual relations, and under normal conditions are both nude when making love. Older couples are generally naked in bed, but nowadays the younger people wear pyjamas or underwear. Young men, particularly if educated in a city, know how to use foreplay to get a woman excited. Until European films were seen in the Nilgiris, however, mouth-kissing was not indulged in, although men did kiss and bite the neck, cheeks and breasts of their women. Inside the house the normal position for intercourse is lying on a bed, but if they have to hurry the couple will use a standing position or stoop over something, with the man entering from behind, as indeed they do when in the forest. Parents may have relations in the same bed their children are sleeping in, in which case they will lie on their sides during intercourse. Curiously, a couple can do this with their baby lying beside them, and it will not be affected by the "bad wind" of coitus; whereas if they do it in another room they must not come near their baby until they have cleaned themselves and put on fresh clothes, for fear that the baby will be affected. Furthermore, if they also have some older children they may take them into the same bed with the baby before having intercourse in that very bed; the belief here being that even though the other children are weaned they too could be affected by this very dangerous "wind" if they were sleeping in another room. Young couples with no children generally sleep in a small room by themselves, on the end of the veranda. If their ageing parents live with them, the couple may leave the inner room to them and sleep under the wide shelf in the outer room. Otherwise a couple will occupy the inner room at night. If a man has two wives he usually has relations with one in the presence of the other, all three sharing the same bed.

Although a young bride should be the first to get up in the morn-